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THAT MR. ADDISON designed to write particularly upon the Subject of the following Essay, we learn from his 321st SPECTATOR. And what Pity was it that he only designed it!



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An ESSAY upon
MILTON'S IMITATIONS
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OF THE
ANCIENTS,
IN HIS
PARADISE LOST.

With some Observations on the
Paradise Regain'd.

*Quando ex Poematibus Græcis vertenda imitandaque sunt insignes
sententia, non semper, aiunt, emendandum ut omnia omnino ver-
ba in eum, in quem dicta sunt, modum vertamus.*

*Scite ergo & consideratè Virgilius, quum aut Homeri,
aut Hesiodi, aut Apollonii, aut Parthenii, aut Callimachi, aut
Theocriti, aut quorundam aliorum locos effingeret, partim reli-
quit, alia expressit.*

Aul. Gellius.

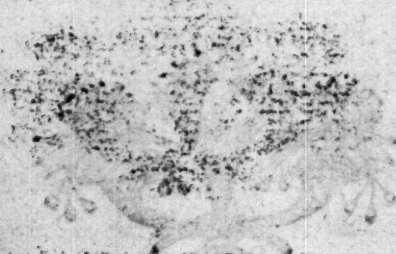


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An Essay upon
MILTON'S IMITATIONS
OF THE
ANCIENTS
IN HIS
PARADISE LOST.
With some Observations on the
Poet's Style and Language.

By
JOHN GAY.
In a Letter to
MRS. ANNE GAY.
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AN
ESSAY
UPON
MILTON'S IMITATIONS
OF THE
ANCIENTS, &c.

ARISTOTLE ascribes the Origin of POETRY to the Pleasure Mankind takes in IMITATIONS, which distinguishes us from all other Creatures, and makes us Lovers not only of this ART, but PAINTING and SCULPTURE. This Pleasure arises from the Comparison the Mind makes betwixt the Imitation and the Thing imitated: For Example, in a Picture
ture

ture or Statue, from comparing them with the Original; and, in Poetry, from comparing the Descriptions with the Objects themselves. Hence it is evident,

THAT, when one good Poet imitates another, we have a double Pleasure; the first proceeding from comparing the Description with its Object; and the second, from comparing the one Description with the other from which it was imitated.

THAT, in every Simile we have a double Pleasure; the first, in comparing the Image it conveys with its Object; the other, in comparing it with the Subject it was designed to illustrate: But, if the Simile be imitated from another Author, we have still one Pleasure more.

THAT, when a Poet imitates a Description from another Poet, which very Description had been imitated from a Third, our Pleasure is still the greater; therefore, in this Respect, the Imitations in MILTON are beyond those in VIRGIL; because he has imitated some Places of VIRGIL which are Imitations of HOMER.

WE must observe, that, in poetical Descriptions, Paintings, &c. the greater Likeness

ness they bear to what we consider as their Original, our Pleasure is the more; and our Distaste in Proportion to their Variation: But here, 'tis different with those secondary Imitations we treat of in this ESSAY: For, frequently, in this Case, a considerable Alteration from the Original has a very agreeable Effect: For we have, in our Nature, a Principle to be delighted with what is NEW, to which, 'tis plain, this latter Kind of Imitations is not very conformable; upon which Account they ought to have, as well as a Likeness, a due Variation, that, at one and the same Time, they may gratify our several Dispositions, of being pleased with what is imitated, and with what is new. And from this it appears, that, in these Imitations, there ought generally to be observed a Medium betwixt a literal Translation and a distant Allusion; as the first destroys the Pleasure we have from what is new, and the latter encroaches on that we receive from Imitations.

HOMER had certainly more Invention than VIRGIL, and VIRGIL more Judgment than HOMER; but HOMER had more of VIRGIL's Talent than VIRGIL had of his; and,

and, besides, possess his own in a greater Degree than VIRGIL did his own: In short, HOMER had more Judgment than VIRGIL had Invention, and more Invention than VIRGIL had Judgment: Yet the *ÆNEID* does not fall so short of the *ILIAD* as VIRGIL's Genius seems to do of HOMER's; which, no doubt, in a great Part, is owing to his skillful Imitations.

THE Passages a Poet is to imitate ought to be selected with great Care, and should ever be the best Parts of the best Authors, and always ought to be improved in the Imitation: So that vastly less Invention and Judgment is required to make a good Original than a fine Imitation. Accordingly, we are told by the old Writer of the Life of VIRGIL, it was a Saying of that Poet's, That it would be easier to take the Club from *Hercules*, than a Line from HOMER.

BUT, from MILTON's having refined exceedingly upon some Passages of HOMER and VIRGIL, I would not pretend to infer, that he was a greater Poet than either of them, tho' the Consideration of the whole Poem will justly intitle him to that Rank; but only, that these Imitations would cost
the

the Author more Pains, and give the Reader greater Pleasure than an original Composition. And, indeed, several of those Passages he has imitate, were so extremely fine in the Original, that to improve them required a Care and Happiness superior to that which produced them.

HOMER has used the Simile of a Flight of Fowls twice in his *ILIAD*, to express the Number and the Motions, the Order and the Clamours of an Army: AS VIRGIL has done the same Number of Times in his *ÆNEID*. We also find the same Simile in the 4th *Georgic*, only in more general Terms, to delineate the Multitude of Spirits in the *Elysium*; and, again, with some Alterations, in the 6th *Æneid*, for the same Purpose. Hence, MILTON has taken both a Simile and Description; the first, in *Book 6th*, to represent the March of MICHAEL's against *Satan's Army*; and the other in *Book 7th*; and, notwithstanding they had so often gone thro' the Hands of HOMER and VIRGIL, yet has given them farther Embellishments. I believe the Reader will be content to see these Passages all together, that he may compare these divine Authors, not

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only

only with one another, but with them-
selves.

Τῶν δ', ὧς ὀρνίθων πέτεσσιν ἔθνεα πολλά,
Χηιδῶν, ἢ γέρων, ἢ κύνων δουλοχρεσίων,
Ἀνίρ ἐν λευκῶν, καὶ εἰς αἰσὶν ῥέεθρα,
Ἔνθα καὶ ἐνθα ποτὶνται ἀγαλλόμεναι πτερύγεσσι
Κλαγγηδὸν προκαθίζοντων, σμαραγεῖ δ' ἑ τε λευκῶν.
Ὡς τῶν ἔθνεα πολλά, &c. *Iliad* II.

ὀρνίθες ὧς
Ἦύτε περ κλαγγὴν γέρων πάλαι ὠρανέθι ὦρδ,
Αἶτ' ἰσπεὶ οὖν χερσὶν αὖ γονὶ καὶ ἀδίοματιν ὕαβρον,
Κλαγγὴ ταίγε πίτοισι ἐσ' Ὀκεανοῦ ῥοαίων,
Ἀνδράνι Πυγμαῖσσι φόνον καὶ κῆρα φέρεται.
Ἥριαι δ' ἄρα ταίγε κακὴν ἔριδα προφίροται. *Iliad* F.

Ceu, quondam nivei liquida inter nubila Cygni,
Cum sese e pastu referunt, & longa canoros
Dant per colla mēdos; sonāt aminis, & Asia longe
Pulsa palus. *Aeneid* 7.

Quales sub nubibus atris
Strymonia dant signa grūes, atque Æthera tranant
Cum sonitu, fugiantque Notos clamore secundo. *Aeneid* 11.

Quam multa in sylvis avium se millia condunt,
Vesper ubi, aut Hibernus agit de montibus imber. *Geor.* 4.

Aut ad terram gurgite ab alto
Quam multa glomerantur aves, ubi frigidus annus
Trans pontum fluit, & terris immixtis apricis. *Aeneid* 6.

As when the total Kind
Of Birds, in orderly Array, on Wing,
Came summon'd over Eden, to receive
Their Names of thee.

THIS

THIS Simile exceeds any of the above; *First*, As it rises so naturally out of the Subject, and was a Comparison so familiar to ADAM. *Secondly*, The Angels were marching thro' the Air, and not on the Ground, which gives it another Propriety; and here, I believe, the Poet intended the chief Likeness. *Thirdly*, The total Kind of Birds much more properly expresses a prodigious Number than any of the former, and gives us an Idea of MICHAEL'S Army exceeding any of these Subjects, to which this Simile is applied in HOMER and VIRGIL, as much in Multitude as the whole Creation of Fowls would do a single Flock of any particular Species, or a Collection in any particular Place. Thus, MILTON has raised the Image in Proportion to his Subject.

HOMER describes the TROJANS marching against their Enemies with Shouts and Clamours, which he illustrates by the last of his two Similes; but, on the contrary, he makes his Countrymen advance with Silence,

Ὅτι δ' αὖς ἴσαν οὐρανὸν μέγα πηϊόντες Ἀχαιοί

Of which Circumstance we find an Imitation,

on, in a Passage of MILTON, in the Neighbourhood of our last Quotation from him.

*At which Command the Powers militant,
That stood for Heaven, in mighty Quadrate join'd,
Of Union irresistible, mov'd on*

*IN SILENCE their bright Legions, to the Sound
Of instrumental Harmony, that breath'd
Heroic Ardour to advent'rous Deeds.*

IF we were to compare these two Descriptions of HOMER and MILTON together, the latter is certainly by far preferable: However, to speak impartially, the above Circumstance appears more graceful in the Original; the Silence of the GRECIANS is there opposed to the Clamours of the TROJANS; but, in MILTON, there is no such Contrast.

THE Beauties of the following Description, which is also in Part taken from the above Similes, will be owned by every Reader.

*Part more wise,
In common, ranged in Figure wedge their Way,
Intelligent of Seasons, and set forth
Their airy Caravan, high over Seas
Flying, and over Lands, with mutual Wing
Easing their Flight; so steers the prudent Crane,
Her annual Voyage, born on Winds; the Air
Floats as they pass; fann'd with unnumber'd Plumes.*

MILTON

MILTON, frequently, in an Imitation, does not confine himself to the Passage he principally takes it from, but renders it more complete by Hints taken from other Places of the same, or from another Author. Thus, he has taken the Hint of the Metaphor *their Caravan*, and Part of the last Line, from these Verses in the first *Georgic*.

*Et e pastu decedens agmine magno
Corvorum increpuit densis exercitus alis.*

I must observe, That, as VIRGIL found it such an immense Labour to improve the Verses of HOMER; of Consequence it must have been a much harder Task for MILTON to improve those very ones of VIRGIL: A Task never one but he was equal for. Whereas, of our ordinary Poets, the whole Merit of their Imitations consists in the Difficulty of imitating, occasioned by Diversity of Subject, as in Centos, &c. and, in these Cases, the more literal they are, the better.

I must here take Notice of one Kind of Imitations, which has a very ill Effect: When one Poet borrows from another a Part of his Fable, or any Story or Circumstance
of

of it, which is anywise remarkable, or extraordinary in itself, it betrays the Fiction, and entirely destroys the Probability of his Fable; for we can never believe the Story, when we see from whence it was so exactly copied.

THIS evidently happens in the first six Books of the *Æneid*, where numberless Circumstances of the Hero's Adventures are borrowed from HOMER's *Odyssey*: For Instance, as *Ulysses*, by the Favour of *Minerva*, had entred the City of *Alcinous* concealed in a Cloud; so *Æneas*, by the Help of his Mother, gets into *Carthage* in the same Manner; with a Detail of other Resemblances. This is one of the great Reasons why HOMER's Poems gain more on our Belief, and, consequently, please us, more than the Works of any other Author. MILTON has imitated this very Passage in a Way not in the least liable to that Fault of which we have found VIRGIL guilty; but which adds highly to the Beauty of his Poem, without diminishing the Credit of it.

*Vix ea fatus erat, cum circumfusa repente
Scindit se nubes, & in aethera purgat apertum.
Restitit Æneas, claque in luce refulsit,*

*Os, humerosque deo similis: namque ipsa decoram
 Casariam gnato genetrix, lumenque juventa
 Purpureum, & latos oculis afflarat honores.
 Quale manus addunt ebori decus, aut ubi flavo
 Argentum Parisve lapis circumdatur auro.*

Aeneid 1.

Down a while

*He sat, and round about him saw unseen:
 At last, as from a Cloud, his fulgent Head
 And Shape star-bright appear'd; or brighter, clad
 With what permissive Glory, since his Fall,
 Was left him, or false Glitter.*

THIS is a known Rule in History, and I think it will very well bear to be transferred to epic Poetry: However, the Rule itself, in either Case, will admit of several Exceptions; as, if the Circumstance be such, as will frequently happen in the Course of Things, without supposing an Imitation; or, if it be imitated, not by the Author, but the Person of whom he relates it. Thus, to give an Example both of the Rule itself, and this last Exception, we are told, in our Annals, that *Hengist*, the *Saxon*, asked of *Vortigern* as much Land as a Bull's Hide would cover; which being granted, he cut the Hide into Thongs, and so circumvented him of a Piece of Ground large enough to build a Fort on; which, from the Occasion, was

was called *Thong-Castle*. Now, this Story is literally the same with that of *Dido*, * in the first Book of VIRGIL, and evidently copied from it; so, consequently, would be look'd on as a Falshood: And I remember MILTON has not given it a Place in his History of that Period, probably, upon that Account. But, *Rapin* supposes, that, as *Hengist* served in the *Roman* Army, he might have been informed of this Stratagem of *Dido*, and so practis'd it in *Britain*: But, after all, as 'tis probable the Churchmen, the Historians, and the only learned Men of the following Ages, were better vers'd in the *Roman* Authors than *Hengist*; so this Story is likelier to be a Falshood than a Truth.

IN the eighth ILIAD, Night putting a Stop to the Victory of the *Trojans*, they encamp on the Field of Battle, having placed Guards, and, particularly, kindled a Number of Fires thro' their Camp. To this, the following of MILTON seems to bear a Resemblance.

Now

* *Mercatique solum, facti de nomine Byrsam, Taurino quantum possent circumdare tergo.*

*Now Night her Course began, and over Heaven
 Inducing Darkneſs, grateful Truce impos'd
 And Silence on the odious Din of War :
 Under her cloudy Covert both retir'd,
 Victor and vanquiſh'd : On the foughten Field
 Michael and his Angels prevalent
 Encamping, plac'd in Guard their Watches round
 Cherubic waving Fires.*

THE Description of the Night not much differing from HOMER's, and the ſubſequent Council, increaſe the Reſemblance : But all this is only ſuch a Likeneſs in the Story as falls under the firſt Exception : For all theſe Circumſtances are ſuch as ordinarily happen in the Courſe of Things, where there is no Imitation. He has taken the Hint in the ſecond Line from one of HORACE'S SATIRES.

----- *Jamque NOX INDUCERE terris
 Umbras, & Coelo diffundere ſigna parabat*

THE Birth of Sin is circumſtantiaily copied from the Account LUCIAN gives of the Production of *Minerva* from the Head of *Jupiter* : And many other Paſſages of the *Paradiſe Loſt* ſeem equally, with this, to incur a Breach of the above Rule : But, perhaps, the Poet might have a greater Liberty, in this Reſpect, from his Subject : For,

as many Divines, and other learned Authors, have been very fond to derive most Parts of the Heathen Mythology from similar Passages of Scripture; for Example, the Giants War has been supposed to be founded on some Tradition of the Rebellion of the Angels; the Story of *Pandora* on that of *Eve*, &c. MILTON might justly have imagined, that any Circumstance of his Poem, if it was not repugnant to Holy Writ, altho' it was pretty closely borrowed from some Part of the Heathen Mythology, might not only pass, but that the latter would be look'd on as the Copy; and consequently, would rather tend to increase than diminish the Probability. For, if we find Originals of several Parts of Mythology in Scripture, may not some other Parts of it have been likewise derived from the Tradition of some Truth not contained in the concise Account of Things Scripture gives. Several Passages in the Description of Hell, as the four Rivers, *Acheron*, *Styx*, &c. the River of *Oblivion*, the Story of *Medusa*, that of *Tantalus*, must particularly be viewed in this Light. MILTON makes Use of this very Reasoning in the
 Story

Story of *Mammon*, whose Character was exactly a Copy of the *Græcian Vulcan*.

*Nor was his Name unheard or unador'd
In ancient Greece; and in Ausonian Land
Men call'd him Mulciber; and how he fell
From Heaven, they fabl'd, thrown by angry Jove
Sheer o'er the Chrystal Battlements; from Morn
To Noon he fell, from Noon to dewy Eve,
A Summer's-Day; and with the setting Sun
Dropt from the Zenith, like a falling Star,
On Lemnos th' Ægean Isle: Thus they relate,
Erring; for he with his rebellious Rout
Fell long before.*

And likewise in the Tenth Book,

*However, some Tradition they dispers'd
Among the Heathen, of their Purchase got,
And fabl'd how the Serpent, whom they call'd
Ophion, with Eurynome, the wide
Encroaching Eve perhaps, had first the Rule
Of high Olympus, thence by Saturn driven
And Ops, e'er yet Dictæan Jove was born.*

- THE Shape and Figure of Sin is also taken from that of *Scylla*; and I think the Probability is rather increased by the Poet's Allusion to the Story of the latter. I am very sensible, that considerable Objections may be made to the whole Allegory of Death and Sin, with respect to its Credibility: But, I only designed to show, that it suffers

suffers nothing, in that Way, by the Imitations in it.

*The One seem'd Woman to the Waste, and fair;
But ended foul in many a scaly Fold
Voluminous and vast, a Serpent arm'd
With mortal Sting: about her Middle round
A Cry of Hell-Hounds never ceasing bark'd
With wide Cerberean Mouths full loud, and rung
A hideous Peal:*

*Far less abhor'd than these
Vext Scylla, bathing in the Sea that Parts
Calabria from the hearse Trinacrian Shore.*

I SHALL here add a Passage of OVID, with other two of VIRGIL, MILTON has had in his Eye upon composing the above.

*Scylla venit; mediaque tenuis descenderat alvo:
Cum sua fœdari latrantibus inguina monstribus
Adspicit:
Et Corpus quarens femorum, crurumque pedumque,
CERBEREOS rictus pro partibus invenit illis.
Statque canum rabies: subjectaque terga ferarum
Inguinibus truncis, uteroque exstante coerces.*

Metamorph. Lib. 14.

*Quid loquar? aut Scyllam Nisi, quam fama secuta est
Candida succinctam latrantibus inguina monstribus,
Dulichias vexasse rates, & gurgite in alto,
Ab timidos nautas canibus lacerasse marinis?*

Eclog. 6.

*At Scyllam cæcis cohibet spelunca latebris,
Ora exertantem, & naves in saxa trahentem,
Prima hominis facies, & pulchro pectore virgo*

Puella

*Pube tenus: postrema immani corpore pristis,
Delphinum caudas utero commissa luporum.*

Æneid. 3.

THERE is a Medal of *Sextus Pompeius*, with a Representation of *Scylla* on the Reverse, which not only may serve to illustrate these Descriptions, but will likewise give the Reader the Pleasure of another Comparison.

HE seems likewise to have had this Line of HORACE in his Mind,

————— *Ut turpiter atrum
Desinat in piscem mulier formosa superne.*

THE MORAL of the ILIAD is, by shewing the ill Effects of Civil Dissensions, designed to promote an Union against the common Enemy, which was a very instructive Lesson for HOMER's Countrymen at the Time he wrote. This MILTON finely imitates in the Reflection he makes on the Concord of the fallen Angels,

*O Shame to Men! Devil with Devil damn'd
Firm Concord holds, Men only disagree
Of Creatures rational, tho' under Hope
Of heavenly Grace: And GOD proclaiming Peace,
Yet live in Hatred, Enmity, and Strife
Among themselves, and levy cruel Wars,
Wasting the Earth each other to destroy:*

As

*As if (which might induce us to Accord)
 Man had not hellish Foes enow besides,
 That Day and Night for his Destruction wait.*

THE Characters of *Æneas* and *Satan*, tho', in one Particular, directly opposite, are both a Compound of those of *Achilles* and *Ulysses*; thus, we see *Satan*, in the Course of the Poem, a wise and prudent Leader, of great Courage and Ambition, a faithful Friend, &c. I have often thought, that the Character of *Achilles*, which is Courage to a Height, is very ill introduced in the *ILIAD*. At his first Appearance in the Poem, he is represented making a Speech, advising his Countrymen to raise the Siege, and save themselves by Flight.

Ἀτρεΐδῃ, νῦν ἄμμι παλιμπλαγχθέντας οἶω
 Ἄψ ἀπονοσῆσιν, εἰκὲν θάνατον γε φύγομεν
 Εἰ δὲ ὁμοῦ πλεμὸς τε δαμᾷ καὶ λοιμὸς Ἀχαιῶν

are the first Words he says. Here, he makes the Plague not the only Motive for a Retreat; he seems to apprehend an equal Danger from the Enemy, and insinuates as much Loss. The only possible Apology for HOMER is, That *Achilles* spoke this only out of Resentment to *Agamemnon*: But that could not be the Case, as this Speech
 is

is prior to their Quarrel, or, at least, prior to the Explication of any such Resentment; so that it must have an Effect quite the contrary from prejudicing us in favours of his Bravery.

As *Satan* resembles *Achilles*, so does *Beelzebub Patroclus*; and, in Imitation of HOMER, MILTON has join'd them in a most intimate Friendship.

*If thou beest he, but Oh, how fall'n! how chang'd
From him who in the happy Fields of Light,
Cloth'd with transcendent Brightness, didst out-shine
Myriads tho' bright! If he whom mutual League
United Thoughts and Counsels, equal Hope
And Hazard in the glorious Enterprize,
Join'd with me once, now Misery hath join'd
In equal Ruin.*

THIS resembles the last Part of the Speech *Patroclus's* Ghost makes to *Achilles* in the 23d ILIAD. Our Author has imitated the rest of the same Speech in his fifth Book, where *Satan* thus accosts *Beelzebub*,

*Sleepest thou, Companion dear? What Sleep can close
Thy Eye-Lids? Thou to me thy Thoughts
Wast wont, I mine to thee was wont to impart:
Both waking we were one; how then can now
Thy Sleep dissent?*

IN both the following Passages the thought is the same; but VIRGIL has varied a little from the Original, by changing the Chariot to a Boat; which Alteration has a very good Effect.

μέγα δ' ἔβραχε φήγιν' ἄλγος
 Ἐπιβοῦν δ' αἰὲν ἰδὲ ἄλγος ἔσθ' ἄλγος τ' ἄριστον.

— Simul accipit alveo

*Ingentem Æneam. Gemit sub pondere cymba
 Sutilis, & multam accepit rimosa paludem.*

IN HOMER, an ordinary Chariot groans under *Minerva* and *Diomede*; but, here, a Vehicle of a higher Nature bends under the Weight of *Æneas*, which far exalts him above HOMER's *Hero* and *Goddeffs*. I could, indeed have wished the last Line had been spared, since it rather seems to extenuate than increase the Miracle; as, in HOMER, the Epithet *Φήγιος* properly does. Hence, this of MILTON, speaking of *Satan*.

*Then with expanded Wings he steers his Flight
 Aloft, incumbent on the dusky Air
 THAT FELT UNUSUAL WEIGHT.*

'Tis worth remarking, How a great Author can embellish the most common, and trivial Things, and render them both surprising and entertaining. Thus, to compare a Multitude

tude to the Leaves of Trees, or Sand on the Sea-shore, are the most trite and barren Similes in Nature; yet MILTON has improved and applied them so artfully, that they appear vastly beautiful.

Λίνα δ' ὀλλοισιν ἑσπόμεναι ἢ Φαλαγγασίν. HOM.

*Quam multa in sylvis autumni frigore primo
Lapsa cadunt folia.* VIRGIL

*Thick as autumnal Leaves that strow the Brooks
In Vallombrosa; where the Etrurian Shades
High over-arch'd embow'r;*

BUT MILTON'S Comparison is by far the exactest; for it not only expresses a Multitude, as the above of HOMER and VIRGIL, but also the Posture and Situation of the Angels. Their lying confusedly in Heaps, covered with the Lake, is finely represented by this Image of the Leaves in the Brooks. Moreover, the falling of a Shower of Leaves from the Trees, in a Storm of Wind, very well represents the Dejection of the Angels from their former Celestial Mansions; and **their faded Splendor wan*, is finely expressed by the paleness and witheredness of the Leaves: OVID uses this very Simile, to express a Paleness. Besides the Propriety of

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* Book 4th.

the Application, if we compare the Similes themselves, MILTON'S is by far superior to the other Two, as it exhibites to our View a real Landskip. In the same Manner he has improved the *ψαμμάθοισιν* of HOMER.

*Unnumber'd as the Sands
Of Barca or Cyrene's torrid Soil,
Levi'd to side with warring Winds, and poise
Their lighter Wings.*

THIS Simile not only represents the Number, but the Smallness and Motion of the Atoms.

*As when Heaven's Fire
Hath scath'd the Forest Oaks, or Mountain Pines,
With singed Tops their stately Growth, tho' bare,
Stands on the blasted Heath.*

THIS is also a very beautiful and close Simile, it represents the majestick Stature, and withered Glory of the Angels; and the last with great Propriety, since their Lustre was impaired by Thunder, as well as that of the Trees in the Simile: And besides, the blasted Heath gives us some Idea of that singed burning Soil, on which the Angels were standing. HOMER and VIRGIL frequently use Comparisons from Trees, to express the Stature, or falling of a *Hero*, but

none

none of them are applied with such Variety and Propriety of Circumstances as this of MILTON; which, tho' it be but one Image, yet contains four Similes; for every Likeness or Point of Comparison is a Simile. I am far from thinking this Closeness in Similitudes a modern Improvement; since, in the best Ancients, we have the finest Examples of it, excepting our Author.

Ἦν τε ἔθνεα εἴσι μελισσῶν ἀδινάων
 Πέτρης ἐκ γλαυρῆς αἰεὶ νέον ἔδχομενάων
 Βοτρυόδιν ὃ πέτοι' ἐπ' ἀνθεσὶν εἰσεννοῖσιν
 Ἄε μὲν τ' ἔνθα ἄλκις πεποτήα' αἰ δὲ τε ἔνθα.

THIS is the first, and one of the finest Similes in the *ILIAD*. It conveys a fine Image, and the Numbers are musical and harmonious, unless some Exception be made to the *like Endings* * of the first two Lines.

Thick swarm'd, both on the Ground and in the Air,
 Brush'd with the Hiss of rustling Wings. As Bees
 In Spring-time, when the Sun with Taurus rides,
 Pour forth their populous Youth about the Hive
 In Clusters; they among fresh Dews and Flowers
 Fly to and fro, or on the smooched Plank,
 The Suburb of their Straw-built Citadel,
 New rubb'd with Baum, expatiate and confer
 Their State-Affairs. So thick the airy Croud
 Swarm'd and were straitned,

MILTON

* See Milton's Advertisement concerning the Verse.

MILTON has here finely imitated HOMER'S Simile, and improved it with the Addition of the three last Lines,

———Or on the smoothed Plank, &c,

which gives the greater Closeness to his Simile, as alluding to the following Council: The Swarms and Clusters of the Bees, finely express the straitned Croud of the Angels; and the Mention of their rustling Wings, gives it another Propriety which HOMER wants. VIRGIL'S Imitation of that Simile is, perhaps, the finest one he has taken from HOMER, in the whole ÆNEID, either for the Beauty of the Verses, or the Application; yet 'tis not equal to MILTON'S,

*Hunc circum innumera gentes, populi que volabant,
Ac veluti in pratis, ubi Apes æstate serena
Floribus insidunt variis, & candida circum
Lilia funduntur; strepit omnis murmure campus. Æneid 6.*

THE following Simile, which MILTON uses to express the small diminish'd Size to which the Angels had reduced themselves, is imitated from one in the first ÆNEID, by which VIRGIL describes the tall majestick Stature of *Dido*, which Simile he has also taken from HOMER.

———Or

Or Fairy Elves,
 Whose midnight Revels, by a Forest-side
 Or Fountain some belated Peasant sees,
 Or dreams he sees, while over-head the Moon
 Sits Arbitress, and nearer to the Earth
 Wheels her pale Course, they on their Mirth and Dance
 Intent, with jocund Musick charm his Ear;
 At once with Joy and Fear his Heart rebounds.

*Qualis in Eurota ripis aut per Juga Cynthi
 Exerces Diana Choros, quam mille secute
 Hinc atque hinc glomerantur Oreades. Illa pharetram
 Fert humero, gradiensque deas supereminet omnes,
 Latona tacitum pertentant gaudia pectus.* *Æneid. 1.*

How exquisitely has MILTON imitated
 this last Line, in his

At once with Joy and Fear his Heart rebounds.

FROM *Diana's* presiding over the Dances
 of the Wood-Nymphs, MILTON took this
 Hint,

——— *While over-head the Moon
 Sits Arbitress,*

IN the above Simile, he had also, with-
 out Doubt, the following Passage of HORACE
 in his Eye.

*Jam Cytherea choros ducit Venus imminente Luna,
 Junctæque Nymphis Gratia decentes
 Alternò terram quatunt pede.*

THAT

THAT VIRGIL's Goddesses were employed in Dancing, as well as MILTON's Fairies, (notwithstanding of HOMER's Simile) may be gathered by explaining CHORUS, in the same Sense it bears in a Simile in the 4th ÆNEID, very parallel to this, where VIRGIL may be said to imitate himself.

*Qualis, ubi hibernam Lyciam, Xanthique fluenta
Deserit, ac Delum maternam invisit Apollo,
* Instauratque choros, mixtique altaria circum
Cretes Dryopesque fremunt, pictique Agathyrsi:
Ipse jugis Cynthi graditur, mollique fluentem
Fronde premit crinem fingens, atque implicat auro:
Tela sonant humeris.*

I SHALL add another Passage of VIRGIL, the last Line of which comes yet nearer to that of our Author's Simile, and the whole may be said to bear some Resemblance to it.

*Tum varia comitum facies: immania cete,
Et senior Glauci chorus, Inoſque Palamon,
Tritonesque citi, Phorcique exercitus omnis.
Læva repent Thetis & Melite, Panopeaque virgo,
Nisæe, Spioque, Thaliaque, Cymodoceque.
Hic patris Æneæ suspensam blanda vicissim
Gaudia pertentant mentem:*

IN MILTON's, the full Description of the Moon, and her pale Light has a fine Effect,

* See Callimachus's Hymn to Apollo.

Effect, as it sets off the Scene, and renders the whole vastly more amusing to the Imagination. VIRGIL was sensible of this in the following Description, which also is an Apparition.

*Jamque dies cælo concesserat, almaque curru
Noctivago Phæbe medium pulsabat Olympum:
Atque illi medio in spatio, chorus ecce suarum
Occurrit comitum, Nymphae, quas alma Cybele
Numen habere maris, nymphaeque e navibus esse
Jusserat: innabant pariter, fluctusque secabant;
Quot prius arata steterant ad littora prora.
Agnoscent longe regem, lustrantque choreis.*

WHERE the Imagination is in the same Way affected. See the Beginning of the 7th *Æneid*.

*Nec candida cursum
Luna negat: splendet tremulo sub lumine pontus, &c.*

THE above Passage of MILTON, with all these fine Places of other Authors I have here undesignedly assembled, may very properly be compared to the Object of VIRGIL's Simile, *Diana* attended by her Nymphs; indeed it surpasses them all as far as that Goddess did the Virgins of her Train; and sure every *Briton* must feel the Joy of *Lætona*, in viewing this Superiority.

THE

THE latter Part of the Speech of *Satan* in the second Book, where he undertakes to go in Quest of the new Creation, is imitated from that remarkable one of *Sarpedon* to *Glaucus* in the 12th *ILIAD*.

*But I should ill become this Throne, O Peers,
And this imperial Sovereignty, adorn'd
With Splendor, arm'd with Power, if ought propos'd
And judg'd of publick Moment, in the Shape
Of Difficulty or Danger, cou'd deter
Me from attempting. Wherefore do I assume
These Royalties, and not refuse to reign,
Refusing to accept as great a Share
Of Hazard as of Honour, due alike
To him who reigns, and so much to him due
Of Hazard more, as he above the rest
High honour'd sits.*

Γλαῦκε, τίν' οἱ τῶϊ τιτιμήμεσθα μέλιστα
Ἐδρῇ τε, &c.

HERE the Thought is the same in both, *viz.* that he who is possessor of the greatest Honours and Advantages, should also have the greatest Share in Dangers and Difficulties: The End of the Speech, which is extremely fine in *HOMER*, cou'd in no Manner possible be imitated by *MILTON*.

THE Reader can be at no Loss which of the following he ought to give the Preference

rence to, though they are both exquisitely good.

*Talibus orabat Juno: cunctique fremebant
Cœlicolæ assensu vario: cœu flamina prima
Cum deprensa fremunt sylvis, & ceca volutant
Murmura, venturos nautis prodentia ventos. Æn. 10,*

*He scarce had finish'd, when such Murmur fill'd
Th' Assembly, as when hollow Rocks retain
The Sound of blustering Winds, which all Night long
Had rouz'd the Sea, now with hoarse Cadence lull
Sea-faring Men o'erwatch'd, whose Bark by Chance
Or Pinnace, anchors in a craggy Bay
After the Tempest.*

THE following Lines are truly musical ;
the Circumstance of the Angels making
their own Exploits the Subject of their
Songs, is imitated from the 3d ILIAD,
where *Helen* is represented as weaving in
a Piece of Tapestry the Battles and Mis-
chiefs she had occasioned.

*Others more mild
Retreated in a silent Valley, sing
With Notes angelical to many a Harp,
Their own heroick Deeds and hapless Fall,
By Doom of Battle; and complain that Fate
Free Virtue should enthral to Force or Chance.
Their Song was partial; but the Harmony
(What cou'd it less when Spirits immortal sing)
Suspended Hell, and took with Ravishments
The thronging Audience.*

THE Particular, in the Structure of Hell-Gates, of their consisting of several Folds of different Materials, is imitated from HOMER's Description of one of his Hero's Shields.

*And thrice threefold the Gates; three Folds were Brass,
Three Iron, three of adamantine Rock,
Impenetrable.*

IN the following Description, how far superior is MILTON to VIRGIL?

*I fled, and cryed out Death;
Hell trembled at the hideous Name, and sigh'd
From all her Caves, and back resounded Death.*

Book 2,

*Clamorem immensum tollit, quo pontus & omnes
Intremuere unda, penitusque exterrita tellus
Italia, turvisque immugiit Ætna cavernis..*

Æneid 3,

As I only designed to take Notice of a few Imitations, which would serve as sufficient Examples of the Poets Art; so I shall pass by all those Hints and Imitations in a single Line, as too minute for Observation: However, there is one of these in this Book, which very well deserves our Attention; HOMER, in his 4th ILIAD, describing the Shooting of that fatal Arrow, which put an End to the late established Peace 'twixt the

con-

contending Nations, distinguishes it with
the moral Epithet of

μαλαίων ἔργα ὀδυρόντων.

which has been highly extolled. See the
Note on the Place, in Mr. *Pope's* Transla-
tion; and the 6th Section of Mr. *Hutchi-*
son's Enquiry into Virtue. MILTON nobly
imitates this Passage,

*Thus saying, from her Side the fatal Key;
Sad Instrument of all our Woe she took.*

DOCTOR *Bentley* has affirmed, That the
following Lines, in the 5th Book, are spu-
rious, and the Production of an ignorant
Editor. But, I suppose, he would not have
been so positive, had he perceived, that
they are a fine Imitation of a beautiful Pas-
sage in *Claudian*.

—Till within Sear
Of tow'ring EAGLES, to all the Fowls he seems
A Phoenix, GAZ'D BY ALL, as that SOLE Bird
When to inhume his Reliques in the Sun's
Bright Temple, to Egyptian Thèbes he flies.

Sic ubi sacunda reparat mori juveniam,
Et patrios idem Cineres, collectaque portat
Unguibus ossa piis, Nilique ad littora tendens
Unicus extremo Phoenix procedit ab Euro:
Conveniunt aquila cunctaque ex orbe volucres
Ut Solis mirentur avem.

IN

IN describing the Sea-Fight of *Actium*, VIRGIL uses a very bold Metaphor, to express the great Bulk of the Ships.

*Credas innare revulsas
Eycladas, aut montes concurrere montibus altos.*

FROM this MILTON took the following Comparifon, to represent the Combat of *Michael* and *Satan*.

*Such as (to fet forth
Great Things by ſmall) if NATURE's CONCORD broke,
Two Planets ruſhing from Aſpect malign
Of fierceſt Oppoſition in mid Sky
Should COMBAT, and their jarring Spheres confound.*

VIRGIL's Comparifon is vaſtly above his Subject, and MILTON's Simile is infinitely beyond VIRGIL's; yet he ſuggeſts how much inferior it was to his Subject, and incapable to convey any ſufficient Idea of it. So far does the Subject of *Paradiſe Loſt* exceed that of the *Aeneid*.

IF VIRGIL had been deſcribing the Battle of *Actium* itſelf, this Metaphor, tho' bold, would have been not only allowable, but beautiful; but, as he was only deſcribing the Representation of that Fight, as it was engraven on a Shield, the Metaphor appears highly improper and abſurd: For how
could

could we ever imagine the Figure of one of the Ships, perhaps not three Inches long, to be as large as a high Mountain, or one of the *Cyclades* Islands.

HESIOD, in his Theogony, describes *Jupiter* scattering his Lightning, and *Briarix*, &c. at the same Time throwing Rocks and Mountains amongst the *Titans*; but with what greater Majesty does the *MESIAH* appear in the *Paradise Lost*, ordering the faithful Angels to desist, commanding the up-rooted Hills to their Places, and solely destroying the rebellious Spirits.

————— In his Right-Hand

Grasping ten Thousand Thunders, which he sent
Before him, such as in their Souls infixt
Plagues; they astonish'd all Resistance lost,
All Courage;

IN this pompous Description, I suppose he had his Eye on the following Passage of HOMER.

Ἄυτο δ' ἐξ ἱδρὸς μεγάλ' ἐκτυπε, δαίομενον δὲ
Ἦκε σέλας μετὰ λαὸν ἁχαιῶν οἱ δὲ ἰδόντες
Θάμβησαν, καὶ πάντας ὑπὸ χλωρόν δέοιεν.

WHAT comes after,

Yet half his Strength he put not forth, but checks
His Thunder in mid-volley, for he meant
Not to destroy, but root them out of Heaven:

seems to be an Imitation of OVID, where,
after

after a pompous Description of *Jupiter* in his Thunders descending upon *Semele*, he adds,

*Qua tamen usque potest, vires sibi demere tentat.
Nec quo Centimanum dejecerat igne Typhoea,
Nunc armatur eo:*

THE Thought here, in both these Authors, is much the same; but if we consider the Occasion, MILTON's is, by far, the sublimest. OVID, in all Probability, would have been incapable of it, had he had the Battle of the Angels, or the Rebellion of the Giants for his Subject.

RAPHAEL dissuades *Adam* from vain Enquiries into the Motions of the heavenly Bodies, in the same Manner as *HORACE* does *Mecenas*, from useless Fears about future Events, both which render us ridiculous in the Sight of the Deity.

—————The rest:

*From Man or Angel, the great Architect
DID WISELY to conceal; or if they list to try
Conjecture, he his Fabrick of the Heavens
Hath left to their Disputes, perhaps to move
HIS LAUGHTER at their quaint Opinions wide.*

*Prudens futuri temporis exitum
Calliginosa nocte premit Deus;
Ridetque, si mortalis ultra fas
Trepidat.*

Ode 29. Lib 3.

Tale

*Tale tuum carmen nobis, divine poeta;
Quale sopor fessis in gramine, quale per astum
Dulcis aqua saliente sitim restinguere rivo.*

MILTON imitates this in the following,

*And sweeter thy Discourse is to my Ear,
Than Fruits of Palm-tree (pleasantest to Thirst
And Hunger both, from Labour) at the Hour
Of sweet Repast; they satiate, and soon fill,
Tho' pleasant: But thy Words with Grace divine
Imbu'd, bring to their Sweetness no Satiety.*

THE fine Turn in the three last Lines is entirely his own, and gives an exquisite Beauty to this Passage above VIRGIL'S.

IN the Beginning of the 9th Book, where he recounts those Subjects, which had been deem'd the only heroick, and as such, handled by those before him. He resembles VIRGIL, in his Introduction to the 3d *Georgic*; who gives a Kind of List of the Themes of his Contemporaries. See also the Beginning of JUVENAL'S first Satire.

THERE is a very remarkable Passage in the third *Iliad*, upon which Madam Dacier gives the following Note, according to the Translation of Mr. Pope.

Τοῖσι ἄρα Τρώων ἡγήτορες ἦντ' ἐπὶ πύργῳ.
Οἱ δ' ὡς αὖτ' εἶλον Ἑλένην ἐπὶ πύργῳ ἰοῦσαν,
Ἦκα πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἔπεα πτερόεντ' ἀγόρευον
Οὐ νέμεσις, Τρῶας ἢ εὐκνήμδας Ἀχαιοῦς

Τοῖσι δ'

Τοιῇ δ' ἀμφὶ γυναικὶ πολὺν χρόνον ἄλγεα πάσχει·

Αἰνῶς ἀθανάτησι θεῇς εἰς ὧπα ἔοικεν.

Ἀλλὰ καὶ ὧς, τοῖν περ ἑοῦς, ἐν νηυσὶ νέεσθω,

Μηδ' ἡμῖν τικέεσσι τ' ὀπίσσω πῆμα λίποιτο.

“ THERE was never a greater Panegy-
 “ rick upon Beauty, than what HOMER has
 “ found the Art to give it in this Place. An
 “ Assembly of Venerable old Counsellors,
 “ who had suffered all the Calamities of a
 “ tedious War, and were consulting upon
 “ the Methods to put a Conclusion to it,
 “ seeing the only Cause of it approaching
 “ towards them, are struck with her Charms,
 “ and cry out, *ὦ νέμεσις, ὦς*. Neverthe-
 “ less they afterward recollect themselves,
 “ and conclude to part with her for the
 “ publick Safety. If HOMER had carried
 “ these old Mens Admiration any further,
 “ he had been guilty of outraging Nature,
 “ and offending against Probability. The
 “ Old are capable of being touch'd with
 “ Beauty by the Eye; but Age secures them
 “ from the Tyranny of Passion, and the
 “ Effect is but transitory; for Prudence
 “ soon regains its Dominion over them.
 “ HOMER always goes as far as he
 “ should, but constantly stops just where
 “ he ought.”

DACIER.

BUT

BUT the following Lines, which are imitated from this Place, exceed it as much as *Eve* can be supposed to do *Helen*; or the Malice of *Satan* the RESENTMENT or WISDOM of the old TROJAN Counsellors. And, I am sure, which gives this strange Effect of her Beauty some Probability, the most inveterate Critick that ever was, cannot help finding himself disarmed of all his Rage and Malice, for some Time, upon reading this exquisite Description,

*Such Pleasure took the Serpent to behold
This flow'ry Plat, the sweet Recess of Eve
Thus early, thus alone: Her heav'nly Form
Angelick, (but more soft, and feminine)
Her graceful Innocence, her ev'ry Air
Or Gesture, or least Action, overaw'd
His Malice, and, with Rapine sweet, bereav'd
His Fierceness of the fierce Intent it brought.
That Space the evil One abstracted stood
From his own Evil, and for the Time remain'd
Stupidly good; of Enmity disarm'd,
Of Guile, of Hate, of Envy, of Revenge.*

————— Then soon

Fierce Hate he recollects. —————

Book 9.

MR. *Dryden* has also, in his Tragedy of *All for Love*, or, *the World well lost*, made a glorious Imitation of the above Pas-

sage of HOMER. *Ventidius* speaks of *Cleopatra*,

*I pity Dolabella; but she's dangerous:
Her Eyes have Pow'r, beyond Thessalian Charms,
To draw the Moon from Heaven; for Eloquence,
The Sea-green Syrens taught her Voice their Flatt'ry;
And, while she speaks, Night steals upon the Day,
Unmark'd of those that hear: Then she's so charming,
Age buds at Sight of her, and swells to Youth:
The holy Priests gaze on her when she smiles;
And, with heav'd Hands forgetting Gravity,
They bless her wanton Eyes: Even I who hate her,
With a malignant Joy behold such Beauty;
And, while I curse, desire it.*

THE *French* Criticks place the whole Excellence of our *English* Plays, in the Beauty of such particular Passages in them, and the Reflection is just, if not extended to those of late Years; but now our *Dramas*, for Regularity and Design, are at least equal to their own. To the three Unities of *Time*, *Place* and *Action*, the *French* have added a Fourth, *viz.* of *Character*. There is no such Variety and Contrast of Character in their Plays, as in ours. To give an Example of this in one of the best of them, those of the *Cid* are all heroick and generous alike, without the least Difference, save in Age or Sex, which makes it
still

still the more unnatural. The only *English Plays* I know of, that fall short in this Respect, are the late Performances of Mr. *Thomson*. *Agamemnon*, and *Edward and Eleonora*, where all the Characters are bad in the first, and good in the latter. However, I suppose, which obviates this Objection, the Author designed them as Contrasts to each other.

*About the new arriv'd, in Multitudes
The Æthereal People ran, to hear and know
How all befell: They towards the Throne supreme
Accountable made Haste.*

Book 10.

HERE, the Circumstance, of the Guardian Angels making no Answer to those Questions they were asked about Man, is imitated from the 6th *Lib.* of the *ILIAD*, where, on *Hector's* Arrival from the Battle, the *Trojan* Women flock about him, enquiring concerning their Husbands, Sons, and Brothers, who, in the same Manner passes on, without giving an Answer. As the great Beauty of this Passage consists in the Affection and Concern the Angels had for Mankind; so I think we have a clearer Notion of that, by taking Notice of the Imitation. The Imitation of this Passage seems
to

to insinuate this Concern and Tenderness of the Angels to be equal to that of a fond Woman for her Husband, or Son.

PLINY, speaking of Vultures, tells us, *Triduo autem ante, aut biduo, volare eos, ubi Cadavera futura sunt.* Upon which Piece of natural History, the following Simile is founded,

As when a Flock
Of ravenous Fowls, though many a League remote,
Against the Day of Battle, to a Field
Where Armies ly encamp'd come flying, lur'd
With Scent of living Carcases, design'd
For Death the following Day, in bloody Fight: Book 10.

OVID's Description of the Journey of *Envy* to *Athens*, and MILTON's of *Sin* and *Death's* to *Paradise*, have a great Resemblance, I must again observe, that whatever he imitates, he adds a Greatness to it; as, in this Place, he alters OVID's Flowers, Herbs, People and Cities, to Stars, Planets and Worlds,

Adoperta nubibus atris
Quacunque ingreditur, florentia proterit arva,
Exuritque herbas, & summa cacumina carpit,
Afflatuque suo populos, urbesque, domosque
Polluit. Metam. Lib. 10.

They with Speed
Their Course thro' thickest Constellations hold,
Spread-

spreading their Bane: the blasted Stars look'd wan;
 And Planets, planet-struck, real Eclipse
 Then suffer'd. Book 10.

*An memorem portus, Lucrinoque addita claustra:
 Atque indignatum magnis stridoribus aquor,
 Julia qua ponto longe sonat unda refusa,
 Tyrrhenusque fretis immittitur ætus avernis?*

THE above fine Description in the 2d *Georgic*, our Author seems to have had in his Eye in the following,

——— Th' other Way Satan went down
 The Causey to Hell-Gate: on either Side
 Disparted Chaos over-built exclaim'd,
 And with rebounding Surge the Bars assail'd,
 That scorn'd his Indignation.

THIS is infinitely beyond the former. The Expression *exclaimed*, in the End of the third Line, is from the 3d *Georgic*, where, in the Story of *Leander*, is this remarkable Passage,

——— *Et scopulis illisa RECLAMANT*
Æquora:

I MUST here observe, That VIRGIL, in this Place, is certainly very injurious to the Passion of *Leander*, in accounting it the very same with that which possesses the Brutes at some Seasons; a Novellist, or Romance-Writer, would have put it on a quite different

different Footing. However VIRGIL has followed PLATO in most of his Opinions, his Notions concerning Love, are directly the Opposite of those we stile Platonick.

*To whom th' incestuous Mother thus reply'd,
Thou therefore, on these Herbs, and Fruits, and Flow'r's
Feed first; on each Beast next, and Fish, and Fowl;
No homely Morsels! and whatever Thing
The Scythe of Time mows down, devour unspar'd:
Till I in Man residing, through the Race,
His Thoughts, his Looks, Words, Actions, all infect:
And season him thy last and sweetest Prey. Book 10.*

THE Progress of Death from the Herbs, Fruits, &c. to Man, puts us in Mind of the Beginning of the ILIAD, where the Plague destroys the Mules and Dogs, before it seizes on Man. And hence MILTON infallibly has taken the Thought. One of the Criticks accounts for this Circumstance of the Plague, by supposing the Destruction of these Creatures, designed as a Warning to Man. This fine Remark holds equally well, when applied to this Passage of our Countryman. Besides which moral Reason, there may a natural One be given; for Death very properly may be said to prey first on Flowers, Beasts, &c. as they were naturally of a shorter

ter Duration than Mankind, especially in those primitive Ages.

'Tis one Particular of the Character of our Nation, that we have been much less successful in inventing, than in improving the Inventions of others. But the Genius of MILTON was confined to neither of these Qualities, as he is equally remarkable for original Beauties, and those which are imitated.

MILTON could make no Improvements in those Places of Scripture he has imitate; but he has given them sometimes peculiar Graces in the Application: For Instance, the following is almost literally from the Scripture.

————— and mighty Seraphim prostrate;
That wish'd the Mountains now might be again
Thrown on them, as a Shelter from his Ire. Book 6.

THERE is a great Beauty here in the Allusion to the late Battle, when Rocks and Mountains were used as offensive Arms.

THE Story, on which MILTON has founded his Poem, is related in Scripture, in a very compendious Manner, without the Mention of many Particulars, and even those somewhat intricate: So that it was
like

like a *Sic vos non vobis* to a Poet, as he would be obliged to supply Circumstances, and fill up the Chasms by mere Invention. This MILTON has done to a Wonder, and all he has invented, or added, is entirely consonant to Probability, and what we have of it in sacred Writ. All the other Authors who have tried to fill up the Out-lines of this Story, have had a very different Success.

ONE would imagine HOMER had Abundance of Materials, as we have several Particulars of the *Trojan War* conveyed to us, besides those he has inserted in his Poems: However, 'tis probable, these were but Fictions of succeeding Writers. Of this there is an Instance in the Reproach of *Ulysses* being the Bastard of *Sisyphus*, which is mentioned both by VIRGIL and QUID. Now, whatever was the Origin of this Aspersion, it was not known to HOMER; for he has placed them several Ages asunder. This, tho' taken Notice of by none of the Commentators, may be learn'd from the Interview of *Glaucus* and *Diomedes*, in the 6th ILIAD, where the former reckons himself the sixth in Descent from that *Sisyphus*,
and

and *Glaucus* could not be much younger than *Ulysses*.

WE have already seen one of the ill Consequences of VIRGIL's want of Materials, as he was obliged to borrow a Part of his Fable from HOMER. And, I must here add, that HOMER himself is accused of borrowing largely from his Predecessors, who wrote on different Subjects: However, if he was guilty of any such faulty Imitations as this, for the mutual Benefit of him and his Readers, their Works do not exist.

CRITICISM serves as much to strengthen the Judgment, as Poetry does to raise the Imagination; even the poorest, and most disagreeable Part of it, the picking out the Faults of a good Author, is of some Use, as it teaches us this important Lesson, always to found our Opinions on Reason, and never on the Authority of a Person. There are several Puns in the *Paradise Lost*, which are the grossest Faults in that Poem. In all the Crimes against Religion or Morality, the best Vindication of the Accused is, to prove they acted conform to their Judgment, however erroneous; but, in Matters of Arts and Criticism, 'tis quite otherwise,

wife: And the best Apology for the Faults of an Author, is, that they were contrary to his own Judgment, and in the Compliance with the ill Taste of those he composed for. How much Puns were the Mode of these Times, 'tis well known. And the Definition of Rhime, in the Advertisment prefixt to his Poem, furnishes us with some Sort of an Argument, that MILTON beheld a Pun in its true Light. *The gingling Sound of like Endings* he there declares against, defines a Pun almost as well as it does Rhime, which indeed are nearly allied; and those Sorts of Puns which he has mostly made Use of, are literally such a Gingle: As, for Example, *beseeching* or *besieging*, &c.

WE may divide the Puns of the *Paradise Lost* into two Kinds; the first, to which belongs the above Example, consists in the Similitude of the Sound of the Words; of this Sort is Rhime, with this Aggravation, that 'tis a Pun in every two Lines: The other, which is yet less excuseable, in their double Meaning; which is only a greater Similitude, or Sameness of Sound. Of this there is a very remarkable Instance in the
 Speeches

Speeches of *Satan* and *Belial* in the 6th Book.

O Friends, why come not on these Victors proud? &c.

BESIDES the Puning, there is a another very considerable Fault in that Passage, and several other Places of the Poem. Any Thing of Burlesque, or Drollery, is, by all the Criticks, excluded from the Seriousness of an Epick Poem. HOMER, in this Particular, has failed as well as MILTON, and VIRGIL has been constantly preferred to them both for his Conduct, according to * the Criticks, entirely blameless in this Respect: However, I remember a Passage in the 12th *Æneid*, where the Poet, in his own Person, breaks through the serious Air of his Poem, and sinks into a low Piece of Ridicule and Drollery.

*Parte alia, media Eumedes in prælia fertur,
Antiqui proles bello præclara Dolonis,
Nomine avum referens, animo manibusque parentem:
Qui quondam, castra ut Danaum speculator adiret,
Ausus Pelidæ pretium sibi poscere currus.
Illum Tydides alio pro talibus ausis
Affecit pretio: nec equis adspirat Achillis.*

IN the same Book, the Death of *Ebusus* is related, with a Circumstance perfectly ludicrous.

* See Spectator, Vol. 4. No. 219.

dicrous. *Chorineus*, snatching a Brand from the Altar, sets his Beard on Fire; the blazing and stinking of which is particularly described.

*Obvius ambustum torrem Chorinaus ab ara
Corripit, & venienti Ebuso plagamque ferenti
Occupat os flammis: illi ingens barba reluxit,
Nidoremque ambusta dedit: super ipse secutus
Casariam lava turbati corripit hostis, &c.*

THIS Circumstance, tho' in a tragical Action, would infallibly produce Laughter in the *Spectators*, and is properer to be Part of an Adventure in *Don Quixot*, or *Hudibras*, than an Epick Poem.

*Postquam prima quies epulis, mensaque remota;
Crateras magnos statuunt, & vina coronant.
Fit strepitus tectis; vocemque per ampla volutant
Atria: dependent lychni laquearibus aureis
Incensi: & noctem flammis funalia vincunt.
Hic Regina gravem gemmis auroque poposcit,
Implevitque mero pateram; quam Belus, & omnes
A Belo soliti. Tum facta silentia tectis;
Jupiter (hospitibus nam te dare jura loquuntur)
Hunc latum Tyriisque diem Trojaque profectis
Esse velis, nostrosque hujus meminisse minores.
Adsit latiniæ Bacchus dator, & bona Juno:
Et vos o cœtum Tyrii celebrate faventes.
Dixit, & in mensam laticum libavit honorem;
Primaque libato, summo tenuis attigit ore,
Tum Bitia dedit increpitans: ille impiger hausit
Spumantem pateram, & pleno se proluvit auro.*

THIS

THIS Action of *Bitias* is also buffoonish, and probably borrowed from that very Passage of the 1st ILIAD, for which HOMER has been blam'd, where *Vulcan's* Aukwardness raises the Laughter of the Gods: However, it must be owned, that the Drunkenness of *Bitias* was a properer Subject for Mirth and Ridicule, than the Lameness of *Vulcan*. The above Quotation deserves Attention, as it is the best Account of the Collations of the Ancients. How inferior is the

————— *Dependent lychni laquearibus aureis
Incenss, & noctem flammis funalia vincunt.*

to this of our Poet?

————— from the arched Roof,
Pendent by subtle Magick, many a Row
Of starry Lamps, and blazing Crescents, fed
With Naptha and Asphaltus, yielded Light
As from a Sky.

THE Pieces of Burlesque we meet with in MILTON, were entirely owing to his excessive Fondness for HOMER; and there are even more injudicious Imitations to be found in VIRGIL: For Example, *Longinus* has censured HOMER for the Story of Polypheme, &c. in the *Odyssey*; yet VIRGIL copies them, and indeed they are still worse
in

in the *ÆNEID*, for in *HOMER* they contribute to the Design of the Poem, in raising the Character of the *Hero*, as his Conquests and Escapes from them are signal Instances of that consummate Prudence, which the Poet proposed to celebrate; this cannot be said of them, as imitated by *VIRGIL*, for there they contribute nothing to the Poet's Design, and rather lessen than advance the Character of the *Hero*.

THERE are several Contradictions, and such like little Faults in the *Paradise Lost*, which are to be imputed to the Blindness and ill Memory of the Author; the common Observation in this Case holding, that Strength of Imagination is generally accompanied with shortness of Memory. I shall here instance a Fault of this Kind, and, I think, the most flagrant One in the Poem, tho' many as ill may be found in the *ILIAD* or *ÆNEID*. It is in the Speech of *Moloch* in the 2d Book.

But perhaps

The Way seems difficult and steep, to scale
 With upright Wing against a higher Foe.
 Let such bethink them, if the sleepy Drench
 Of that forgetful Lake benumb not still,
 That in our proper Motion we ascend

Up

*Up to our native Seat : Descent and Fall
To us is adverse. Who but felt of late,
When the fierce Foe hung on our broken Rear
Insulting, and pursued us thro' the Deep,
With what Compulsion, and laborious Flight,
We sunk thus low ? Th' Ascent is easy then.*

IF the Poet had designed to inform us, that the natural Motion of Spirits was upwards, and just the contrary of what we call Gravity, he should have told it in his own Person, or made some of the Angels relate it to *Adam*. But it is certainly most absurd, to make a Spirit, in the Time of a deep and important Consultation, spend a Dozen of Lines, in telling what every one of his Auditors must have known, as well as himself, if it was really the Case. 'Tis exactly the same, as if a General Officer, in the solemn Debates of a Council of War, should rise up, and with a long grave Speech inform his Colleagues, that it was easier to go down than Up-hill.

DOCTOR *Bentley* very well remarks the Contradiction, in the Word *Flight*, being applied to Sinking, which he amends, by putting Strife in its Place, which leaves the Matter just as it was ; for the Impropriety lay in the Word *Sunk*.

SOME

SOME

lay in the Word *Wax*.
Matter, and as it was for the Propriety
pointing still in its Place, which leaves the
applied to sinking, which he amends, by
Contradiction, in the Word *Wax*, being
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as himself. He was really the Case. This
of his Address must have known, as well
Doctor of Laws, in telling what every one
abundantly marks a Spirit in the Union of a
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abundantly. He should have told it in his
words, and put the contrary of what was
that the natural Motion of Spirits was up
in the Poet had begged to inform us



SOME
OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
PARADISE REGAIN'D.

THE Prejudice of the World, in
contemning this Poem, is yet
less excuseable; than the Partia-
lity of the Author, in prefer-
ring it to the *Paradise Lost*. 'Tis indeed
far inferior to that noble Poem; but yet as
far beyond any other Composition since the
Times of VIRGIL. The Moral of it is a fit
Sequel to that of the *Paradise Lost*: In that
we had an Example of Disobedience, and
the ill Effects of it; and here an illustrious
Pattern of the contrary. We see a successive
Triumph over all the Temptations of Lux-
ury, Wealth, Glory and Power, tho' en-
forced

forced in the strongest Manner. If we were to compare it to the *Odyſſey*, in the Reſpect of its being a ſecond Production; we ſhall find it entirely free of thoſe Kind of Faults, which *Longinus* lays to the Charge of that Poem. And if the Reader can be prevailed upon to go through this Piece, notwithstanding what has been ſaid of it, we ſhall aſſure him, that he'll neither find barren Wilds, nor meet with Monſters or Giants: And that he may not have barely our Word to rely on, we ſhall lay before him, as a Specimen of the Soil, ſome of thoſe fine rich Grapes and Fruits it produces.

THE firſt Lines allude to thoſe four Verſes which ſhould begin the *ÆNEID*, but have been rejected as ſpurious by the Generality.

*Ille ego, qui quondam gracili modulatus avena
Carmen, &c.* _____

*I who ere while the happy Garden ſung,
By one Man's Diſobedience loſt, now ſing
Recover'd Paraדיſe to all Mankind,
By one Man's firm Obedience fully try'd
Through all Temptation, and the Tempter foil'd,
In all his Wiles, defeated and repulſ'd,
And Eden rais'd in the waſte Wilderneſs.*

THESE

THESE give us MILTON's Opinion about the *Ille ego* of VIRGIL; for he would never have imitated them, if he had not thought them genuine. The above Quotation deserves a better Commendation, than that it far excels its Original. The last Line may very well describe this whole Poem, if we consider its noble Beauties, and what barren Subject, as to a Production of this Kind, the Poet had to work upon.

LORD *Shaftsbury* ingeniously observes, how unnatural and aukward the Invocation of a Muse appears in the Works of a modern Christian Poet; and, on the contrary, how graceful in an Ancient, and what Influence the Belief of such a Presence would have, in elevating his Thoughts. This may serve as a Commentary upon our Poet's Address in this Poem, and his *Paradise Lost*.

*Thou Spirit, who ledst this glorious Eremite
Into the Desert, his victorious Field,
Against the spiritual Foe, and brought'st him thence,
By Proof the undoubted Son of GOD; inspire,
As thou art wont, my prompted Song, else mute,
And bear, &c.*

THE

THE Departure of *Satan*, to go about his Enterprize, is poetically related.

*So to the Coast of Jardan he directs
His easy Steps; girded with snaky Wiles,
Where he might likeliest find this new-declar'd,
This Man of Men, attested SON of GOD.*

IN the same Spirit is this Passage,

*So spake the Eternal Father, and all Heaven
Admiring stood aSpace; then into Hymns
Burst forth, and in Cælestial Measures mov'd,
Circling the Throne and singing, while the Hand
Sung with the Voice, and this the Argument.*

The Ascent of our Saviour into the Wilderness, is accounted in a beautiful and natural Manner.

*One Day forth walk'd alone, the Spirit leading;
And his deep Thoughts, the better to converse
With Solitude, till far from Track of Men,
Thought following Thought, and Step by Step led on,
He entred now the bordering Desert wild,
And, with dark Shades and Rocks environ'd round,
His holy Meditation thus pursued.*

WHAT a Number of Beauties in the following?

—————hunger'd then at last
*Among wild Beasts: They, at his Sight, grew mild,
Nor sleeping him nor waking harm'd, his Walk,
The fiery Serpent fled, and noxious Worm,*

The

The Lyon and fierce Tyger glar'd aloof.
 But now an aged Man, in rural Weeds,
 Following, as seem'd, the Quest of some stray Ew,
 Or wither'd Sticks to gather; which might serve
 Against a Winter's Day, when Winds blow keen,
 To warm him wet returned from Field at Eve,
 He saw approach; who first, with curious Eye
 Perus'd him, then with Words thus utter'd spake,
 Sir, What ill Chance has brought thee to this Place,
 So far from Path or Road of Men, who pass
 In Troop or Caravan? For single none
 Durst ever, who return'd, and dropt not here
 His Carcass, pin'd with Hunger and with Drought.
 I ask the rather, and the more admire;
 For that to me thou seem'st the Man, whom late
 Our new baptizing Prophet at the Ford
 Of Jordan honour'd so, and called thee SON
 Of GOD; I saw and heard: For we sometimes
 Who dwell this wilde, constrain'd by Want, come forth
 To Town or Village nigh, (nighest is far)
 Where ought we hear, and curious are to hear
 What happens new; Fame also finds us out.
 To whom the SON of GOD, who brought me hither
 Will bring me hence, no other Guide I seek.
 By Miracle he may, replied the Swain,
 What other Way I see not; for we here
 Live on tough Roots and Stubs, to Thirst inur'd
 More than the Camel, and to drink go far,
 When to much Misery and Hardship born:
 But, if thou be the SON of GOD, command
 That out of these hard Stones be made the Bread
 So shalt thou save thyself, and us relieve
 With Food; whereof we, wretched, seldom taste.
 He ended, and the SON of GOD replied,
 Think'st thou such Force in Bread? Is it not written

(For

(For I discern thee other than thou seem'st) &c.
 Whom thus answer'd th' arch Fiend now undisguis'd,
 'Tis true, I am that Spirit unfortunate, &c.

WE must observe, That, in all this Story, we have no Intimation from the Poet, that *Satan* was concealed under this Appearance; which adds to our Pleasure, by an agreeable Surprise upon the Discovery. In the first Book of the *Æneid*, *Æneas* being driven by a Storm upon an unknown Coast, and going in Company with *Achates* to take a Survey of the Country, is met in a thick Wood by a Lady, in the Habit of a Huntress: She enquires at them, if they had seen two Sisters of her's, in a like Dress, employed in the Chace. *Æneas* addresses her as *Diana*, or one of her Nymphs, and begs she would tell him the Name and State of the Country the Tempests had thrown him upon. She declines his Compliment, informs him, she was no Goddess, but only a *Tyrian* Maid, gives an Account of the Place, and a full Relation of *Dido's* History and Settlement there. IN RETURN, *Æneas* acquaints her with his Story, and particularly the Loss of great Part of his Fleet in the late Storm.

Storm. Upon which, she assures him, from an Omen which appeared to them, that his Ships were safe, bids him expect a kind Reception from the Queen; and then turning to go away, *Æneas* discovers her to be his Mother, the Goddess of Love. If VIRGIL had not informed us of her being *Venus*, till this Time, and in this Manner, it would have had an agreeable Effect in surprising the Reader, as much as she did *Æneas*; but his Conduct has been quite the Reverse, for, in the Beginning of the Story, he lets the Reader into the Secret, and takes Care, every now and then, to re-mind him.

Cui mater media sex tulit obvia sylva, &c.

HOWEVER this Piece of Art HOMER seems as much to be a Stranger to, as VIRGIL. There's also a fine Instance of it, in the Discovery of *Uriel*, in the 3d Book of *Paradise Lost*.

How artful is his Excuse for coming into our SAVIOUR's Presence.

*Hard are the Ways of Truth, and rough to walk,
Smooth on the Tongue discoursed, pleasing to th' Ear,
And tuneable as Sylvan Pipe or Song;
What Wonder then if I delight to hear
Her Dictates from thy Mouth? Most Men admire
Virtue, who follow not her Love: Permit me*

To

*To hear thee when I come (since no Man comes)
 And talk at least, tho' I despair to attain.
 Thy Father, who is holy, wise and pure,
 Suffers the Hypocrite or Atheous Priest
 To tread his sacred Courts, and minister
 About his Altar, handling holy Things,
 Praying or vowing, and vouchsaf'd his Voice
 To Balaam reprobate, a Prophet yet
 Inspir'd; disdain not such Access to me.*

THE first Book concludes with the following,

*He added not; and Satan bowing low,
 His gray Dissimulation disappear'd;
 Into thin Air diffus'd: For now began
 Night with her sullen Wings to double-shade
 The Desert, Fowls in their Clay-nests were couch'd;
 And now wild Beasts came forth the Woods to roam.*

I SHALL only recommend the Description of the Entertainment set before our SAVIOUR in the next Book; that of the *Parthian* Army in the Third; the fine Map of *Italy*, the glorious View of *Rome*, far excelling the noblest Descriptions the *Roman* Wits ever gave of their Capital; and that of *Athens* in the Fourth.

F I N I S



